



News Release

Arizona Department of Public Safety

POST OFFICE BOX 6638 * PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85005-6638

Date: February 22, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Direct Inquiries to: Sergeant Harold Sanders

E-mail: "pio@azdps.gov"

Arizona Department of Public Safety Canine Unit Drug Seizures

On Wednesday, February 21, 2007, the Arizona Department of Public Safety Canine Unit conducted two separate traffic stops on Interstate 10 near Casa Grande which resulted in the seizure of large quantities of illicit drugs being transported by motor vehicle for sale.

The first traffic stop occurred around 0842 hours, near Milepost 222, where a four door sedan was stopped for violation of the posted speed limit and following too close. During contact with the driver the DPS Canine Handler observed indicators from the driver consistent with criminal activity. As a result a canine search was conducted of the vehicle where the canine alerted to the rear trunk, where 190 pounds of Marijuana was located. The Marijuana seizure has an estimated street value of \$104,500 and was being transported to an unknown destination for sale. The driver, Jose Luis Gaxiolla Valle, age 28, was arrested and booked into the Pinal County Detention Center for Possession of Marijuana, Possession for Sale and Transportation for Sale. The vehicle was seized in accordance with state forfeiture laws.

The second traffic occurred around 1020 hours, near Milepost 208, where a two door coupe was stopped for unsafe lane usage. During contact with the driver, the DPS Canine Handler observed indicators from the driver consistent with criminal activity. A consent search revealed eight fire extinguishers concealed in the side panels of the vehicle. Inspection of the fire extinguishers revealed that each contained approximately two pounds Methamphetamine "Ice" in each extinguisher for a total of 16 pounds. The Methamphetamine seizure has an estimated street value of \$120,000. The driver, Samuel Zepeda, age 25, was arrested and booked into the Pinal County Detention Center for Possession of Methamphetamine, Possession for Sale and Transportation for Sale. The vehicle was seized in accordance with state forfeiture laws.

Lieutenant Angel Leos, Jr., the Canine Unit Commander will be available for additional questions from 1300 hours to 1700 hours, along with the seized drugs and the fire extinguisher containers containing the Methamphetamine.

Location: the Knutson DPS Sub-station on 16th Street and University. Please advise if you plan to view the evidence, so I can make arrangements at the front desk.